

## FIDDLEHEADS

Fiddleheads are the coiled tops of the shoots of young ferns. Here in Ontario, we are most familiar with fiddleheads from the ostrich fern. They are an early spring green that can be obtained most readily at farmers' markets, farm stands and specialty grocers. Look for fiddleheads that are firm, tightly curled, and dark green in colour. Once the shoots begin to unfurl, they are no longer edible. If you decide to go out foraging for your own, be sure of what you are picking: The fiddleheads of many varieties of ferns should not be eaten as they can be toxic.

Fiddleheads should be cleaned thoroughly in several changes of water, and all brown, papery or slimy bits should be removed. They can be eaten simply steamed (for about 15 to 20 minutes), boiled (for about 8 to 10 minutes) or sautéed, or used as you would asparagus or broccoli.

Many thanks to Chef David Garcelon for contributing this soup recipe.



### EMERALD GREEN FIDDLEHEAD SOUP

By David Garcelon  
Executive Chef, The Fairmont Royal York

4 servings

- 1 lb fiddleheads, washed and the stems trimmed of any brown
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 leeks, chopped
- 3 medium potatoes, diced  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1/4 baguette, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

Select 12 of the nicest fiddleheads. In a pot of boiling salted water, cook until tender, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain well. Reserve as a garnish for the soup.

In a large saucepan, heat 1 tbsp of oil on medium heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Add potatoes, remaining fiddleheads, salt and pepper and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes.

Add broth, stir well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, partially cover pot and simmer until vegetables are very tender, about 15 minutes. Purée soup in batches in a blender until very smooth. Stir in cream and adjust seasoning.

In a large sauté pan, heat remaining oil over medium-high heat. Add baguette cubes, season with salt and pepper, and sauté until crisp and golden brown. Drain on paper towels.

Garnish each bowl of soup with 3 fiddleheads and sprinkle with croutons just before serving.